

TOWN OF MANSFIELD
Solid Waste Advisory Committee
Minutes of the Meeting
June 15, 2006

Present: Gogarten (chair), Smith, Roberts, Knox, Hultgren (staff), Walton (staff)
Chair Gogarten called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

The minutes of March 9, 2006 were approved.

Walton stated that the bottle bill expansion, electronics recycling, and green building standards bills proposed this past legislative session did not make it into law.

Walton distributed an article on the development of biodegradable plastics, which are starting to be seen in stores. Some of the biodegradable plastics are plant-based starches combined with polymers (derived from fossil fuels). There is now a certification process to ensure that the biodegradable claim is substantiated. Biodegradability is tested in commercial applications.

The final transfer station user report was distributed to members. The discrepancies that had existed in previous reports have been worked out, but the final conclusion of the study has not changed. With the large number of low quantity users of the transfer station, it is not recommended that a pre-paid bag system be implemented at this time (while our current system is working reasonably well). The pre-paid bag program may be revisited if the single-family service is unworkable under a trash collector other than Mayo & Sons.

Walton stated that the paint swap will be held this Saturday, June 24. A couple of volunteers are lined up with staff support from Ginny and Wendy. It is anticipated that residents will be eager to drop off unwanted paint. The question is will those using the transfer station that day be interested in "shopping" for free paint. Publicity was sent out through the schools and flyers have been posted in public places. Information was printed in the trash bills, placed on the website and in the local newspapers. There are a few outlets for leftover paint – the Housing Authority, a summer camp painting project at the transfer station and the Middle School art program.

The three spring community service days, through UConn Community Outreach, drew a large group of volunteers who cleaned up litter along the North Eagleville and Hunting Lodge Road corridor. Walton has requested help again for this fall during several community service days including three litter collections, canvassing the apartments with recycling information at the beginning of the school year and helping with the Festival on the Green. Gogarten suggested taking pictures of the piles of trash to use in an anti-litter campaign.

Walton reported that she looked at a container, which Willimantic Waste Paper will give to the town to use for a plastic grocery bag collection at the transfer station. The

container with three different openings originally came from a Staples store. It was suggested that the summer art project might include painting this container.

Walton stated that the composting workshop on May 6 drew about 20 residents; the remainder of the compost bins (11 of them) were sold. Because the cost of the compost bins has risen so much, members were asked if it is worthwhile offering bins in the future at a higher cost. It was suggested that a small item, such as a compost kitchen collection carrier, be given away for any future workshops.

Walton stated that all the bottles and cans recycling containers are now out at the parks – a total of 30 have been constructed by public works over the past three years. They are being well used.

Hultgren reported that the single family contract ends in September, 2006. The Town will be going out to bid this summer for the single family contract. The contract is going through some revisions to avoid past problems. Specifically, an initial 90 day trial period is being proposed in the event the collector awarded the bid is not able to keep track of the service levels. The contract excludes automated collection, which would not be compatible with lower trash service levels. This may limit the number of bidders since the industry is moving toward automated collection with 65 and 95 gallon containers.

Walton stated that there is a growing interest in organic land care. The Connecticut Northeast Farming Association offers excellent workshops on this subject. Reducing the use of pesticides and fertilizers is part of the Connecticut Climate Change Action Plan and DEP is advocating organic land care for businesses and municipalities. Since this ties in with hazardous waste prevention and composting, the committee supported the idea of offering a workshop in the fall. It was suggested that local landscapers be invited to this workshop.

Walton reported that the elementary school composting program may be in for a change. Difficulty continues with getting the full cooperation of some of the custodial staff. The Director of Maintenance is proposing that Vinton and Goodwin Elementary Schools have their own compost systems phased in. Walton is working with the Director on the type of design that will accommodate the impact of a bobcat loader.

The next meeting is scheduled for September 7, 2006. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Virginia Walton
Recycling/Refuse Coordinator

Cc: Lon R. Hultgren, Director of Public Works, Members, file, Town Manager, Town Clerk